

THE

Single Sheet vol 79

ITALIAN HUSBAND:

OR, THE

VIOLATED BED AVENGED.

A

MORAL DRAMA.

By EDWARD LEWIS, M.A. *K*



L O N D O N :

Sold by M. COOPER, at the Globe in Pater-noster-Row,
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Dramatis Personæ.

COUNT VARINI, a noble *Venetian*.

BERINTO, a Merchant of *Venice*.

STURIO, Gentleman to *Varini*.

CASTRUCCHIO.



MELLINTO.

RAQUINTO.

GLORIANA, *Varini's* Lady, Daughter to *Berinto*.

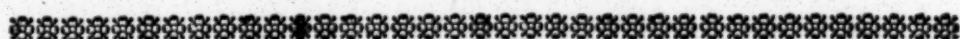
FORTIA, her Woman.

VALERIA.

SCENE, VENICE throughout.



T H E
I T A L I A N H U S B A N D .



ACT I. SCENE I. *Venice.*

An Apartment in Count Varini's House.

Enter Varini and Berinto.

Var.  WELCOME to *Venice*, Seignior *Berinto*,
welcome.
With Pleasure I behold the Air of
Vernon

On you producing the same good Effects
As that of *Venice* does on *Gloriana* :
Health, blooming Health, appears in both your Faces,
And equal 'tis, I hope, to what it seems.

Ber. I thank you. 'Twould be base Ingratitude
In me, should I, in Point of Health, or ought
Has hitherto befallen me, complain.
I am not what I was. My Joints through Age
Grow stiff. The Seas, and *Corsairs* of *Algiers*,
Have brought my Fortune into narrower Bounds,
By more than Fifty Thousand Pounds twice told.

A 2

But

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But yet all's well, my Lord ; and that 'tis well,
 Do I adore the Sovereign wise Disposer,
 Whose Ways are in the Deep, not fathomable
 By Reach of human Line. But this we know,
 That he, with wond'rous Patience, bears our Faults :
 And this we likewise know, when he begins,
 He seldom ceases till he makes an End.
 There seems to be a Measure, determin'd Limits,
 A certain Stint for Guilt, where when they come,
 Or Persons be they, or Families, or Kingdoms,
 The dire Decree goes forth, strike, and strike home,
 To make Men sensible of their Offences,
 And who it is whose Anger they incur.
 When that's the Case, Misfortunes come not single,
 As obvious is to common Observation ;
 But one treads close upon another's Heels :
 Nor Respite gives from Ills, nor Intermiſſion.
 Just as when Winds from *Tbrace* come pouring down,
 Old Ocean swells, and from its briny Bottom
 Up boils black Mud and Sand : The foaming Billows,
 With Rage continual, lash th' affrighted Shore.
 And thus does he preserve the moral World,
 The friendly Converſe, and the ſocial Life :
 Nor ſuffer this good Earth to be the Seat
 Of wild Uproar ; the doleful Habitation
 Of Fiends ; incarnate Devils, deſtroying and deſtroy'd.
 Seeing then the Darts fly thick, Loſs after Loſs,
 I thought it beſt retire whiſt ought remain'd,
 As well for Leiſure to reflect upon
 My former Way of Life, as to endeavour
 To ward off ſtill ſeverer Strokes, by following
 Such Courſes, as himſelf had, in great Mercy,
 Preſcrib'd, and promis'd that he would approve of.
 Theſe Accidents, theſe Thoughts expell'd me *Venice*,
 Made me deſert the Seas, and fix at *Vernon*.
 And then a Will reſigned ; a Mind ſubmiſs
 To the Decrees of Heaven ; a conſtant Temperance ;
 In all Things moderate ; and due Exerciſe ;
 A Body firm originally, and ſtill more

Confirm'd

THE ITALIAN HUSBAND.

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Confirm'd by Travel in my younger Years ;
These brace my Nerves, these make my Blood run
clear,

Support my Spirits, and yield me constant Health.

Var. The Castle of *St. Brien* was no Stranger

To good *Berinto's* Character. A Man

In Honour clear ; of strict Integrity ;

Not negligent in Duty tow'rds his Maker :

Benevolent to Man, prompt to assist,

As fit Occasion offer'd, or by Money,

By pers'nal Toil, by's Interest, or by Counsel :

A Merchant, not successful, having suffer'd

Great Loss at Sea by *Turks* at War with *Venice*.

Descended from a Fam'ly, in whose Race

Of Ancestors one, not long since, had borne

The Style, and high Authority of *Doge*.

All this I heard, and yet, tho' *Vernon* lay

But one League from my Castle of *St. Brien*,

Berinto's Person I was not acquainted with,

Nor yet perhaps had been acquainted with,

But for an Accident, the happiest far

That e'er *Varini* met with : An Accident,

That reinstated me in Paradise,

Afforded Joys beyond Imagination,

Made *Gloriana* mine.

Ber. If a fond Father may be thought to judge

Impartially, she ever was a Girl

Most dutiful, and not more fair than virtuous :

But human Joys are not to be depended on ;

Are wrote in Sand, the lightest Blast obliterates,

And suffers not their Traces to remain.

Varini's Person no Woman can dislike.

Your heroic Qualities, your Services to *Venice*,

Your private Virtues, the Glories of your House,

That warm Affection, that Tendernefs, that Love,

With which you took her blushing to your Arms :

These should not fail to raise in her a Passion

Equal to yours.

But still, my Lord, remember that she's Woman.

Dream

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Dream not of Paradise, but still conceive
Yourself a weary Wanderer here on Earth,
Subject to the like Ills with other Men.
But here she comes. Just such her Mother was.
But ah! she's gone: that Zest of Life is gone:—
But hush my Soul: Have Patience! but few Suns
Will th' eastern Clime illumine, e'er we both
Again shall meet to part no more for ever.

S C E N E II.

Enter Gloriana, who goes up to Berinto bending the Knee.

Glor. My Father! Sir, your Blessing.

Ber. May Heaven, my Child, and all the Powers
therein

Conspire to make you happy. Love with Ardour;
May it be mutual, nor admit Competitor:
May both be easy, chearful, and in Health
Abounding, both be constant, and never leave
The Paths of Honour, of Virtue, and of Piety;
Belov'd in Life, lamented at your Death,
Be hence remov'd to everlasting Joys:
The Products of your unpolluted Bed
Surviving; the Lads, as great *Varini*, brave:
The Girls, as *Gloriana*, chaste and fair.

Var. Thanks, good *Berinto*.

Ber. But how I'm pleas'd to see the blushing Cheek,
And coral Lip return'd, as when at *Vernon*!

Var. And something else perhaps not so discernable,
When known, will give you Joy not less compleat.
What think you, Father, of a young *Varini*?

Ber. Hail *Venice* pleasing Seat, and ye soft Gales
That blow from *Adria*, bearing on your Wings
Such mighty Blessings. But blush not, *Gloriana*.
Marriage is honourable; and the Effects of Marriage
Degrade not, nor yield Pre-eminence to Virgins.
Defilement 'tis degrades. Defilement does
Imply irregular Commerce.—

Glor.

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Glor. 'Tis long, Sir, since we've seen you; I therefore hope

You now intend to make some stay at *Venice*.

Ber. I must, my Dear, immediately be gone.
A Business of Importance brought me hither,
Which executed, I just call'd to see you,
And must at *Vernon* be my morrow's Noon.

Glor. Not stay one Night! th' Evening, Sir, draws on.

Ber. The better trav'ling, Child; the Cool thereof
I shall make use, 'twill make my Journey easier
To-morrow. [Rings a Bell. Enter Servant.]

Leonardo hasten, call a Gondola. [Exit Servant.]

The good St. *Mark* protect my *Gloriana*.

My Lord, your most obedient.

Var. Seignior *Berinto*, yours, and a good Journey,
Since pressing Business won't permit your stay. [Exeunt.]



A C T II. S C E N E I.

Enter Gloriana and Fortia.

Glor. **FORTIA**, methinks, I wish my Father would
Have been prevail'd upon to stay at *Venice*,
At least this Night. Unusual Terrors seize me;
My Spirits sink; the Current of my Blood
Runs chill; a sudden Damp creeps round my Heart.
Besides, last Night I heard the Cricket cry,
At my Bed's head the solemn Death-watch beat,
Close at my Window scream'd the Bird of Night,
And from my Candle hung a Winding-sheet.
Oh my Father! shield him, ye heavenly Powers;
Blow soft, ye Winds, and waft him safely o'er
The *Adriatic* Main. Oh! had he stay'd,
Only till Morn I should have been at Ease.
But 'twas to serve a Friend he hither came,

Whose

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Whose Business Haste requir'd ; and when a Friend
Berinto calls, you may with equal Ease
 Persuade his Stay, as stem the Ocean's Tide.

Fort. He is indeed a worthy Gentleman.
 Doubt not his Safety, Madam, nor dread the Sea.
 In ancient Times, when *PANIMS* rul'd the Land,
 Stormy and boisterous was the *Adriatic*,
 Yielding to Mariners a dangerous Passage :
 But Authors grave, of wond'rous Sanctity,
 Whom nothing e'er could tempt to speak Untruth,
 Stanch and true Sons of holy *CHURCH*, aver,
 That when the Mother of great *CONSTANTINE*,
 Saint *HELEN*, found the sacred *CROSS* whereon
 Was hung our dear Redeemer, she likewise found
 The *NAILS* * that fix'd him to it, in Number three :
 Whereof she one into a Bridle's Bit
 Converted ; of the second made a Crown ;
 And sent them both a Present to her Son,
 That he, and all succeeding him in Empire,
 To whom were to descend those precious *RELIQUES*,
 By bearing on their Head, (the Seat of Sense)
 A Crown made of the Cross, and with their Hands
 A Rein directing, which approach'd the Cross,
 Might learn to keep the Faith, to rule with Justice,
 And put to Flight, by Virtue of those Nails,
 Their Foes, or Men were they, or Fiends apostate,
 But the third Nail, when from the Holy Land
 Into the West good *Helena* return'd ;
 The third and sole remaining Nail she threw
 Into this Gulph of *Venice*, being affected
 With pious Pity for Sea-faring Wretches,
 Who here so often lost their Lives. And thence
 'Tis come to pass, that what was call'd the Gulph,
 The Grave, and the Devourer of poor Sailors,
 Is now become a Sea serene and calm.
 Then fear not, Madam, but be comforted,
 Pluck up your Spirits, your Father's in no Danger :

* See *Baronius ad Ann.* 326. For even in a Point of such Importance,
 the Fathers are not unanimous.

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rather dread Calamities at home.

Nor is it Chirp of Cricket, Screech of Owl,
Or other such like Baubles, which or Guilt,
Or great Dejection, only make portentous,
That me affright. News from St. *Briens*, Madam,
Would damp the noblest Height of human Courage.

Glor. News from St. *Briens*, *Fortia*! pray what News?

Fort. You know his Lordship's Bailiff *Giovanni*
Lives in a Farm near to his Castle Gate.
Whilst he at Dinner sate, a favourite Hen
Came cackling, and at's Feet lay'd a live Chick,
Perfect with Wings and Claws, with Eyes and Voice,
Which ran without Delay after its Mother.

But lo! a greater Wonder justly fills
All Hearts with Horror and Amazement dire:
Just underneath the Table th' Earth gap'd wide,
And did disclose a bubbling Spring of Blood,
Whence Drops resulting sprinkled all the Board.
Fix'd in Suspence at this, one, from the Cellar,
Ran and declar'd the Wine was in a ferment,
Tho' fin'd before, and boil'd in every Vessel,
As if set o'er a Fire intense and large.

Mean while a Serpent's Carcase they beheld
Dragg'd out of Doors, with eager Haste, by Weasels;
A Shepherd's Bitch came gaping, from whose Jaws
Leap'd forth a lively, large, runbelly'd Toad:
A Ram ran full against a Dog spontaneous,
And at one fatal Stroke brake the Dog's Neck.

Glor. Strange Wonders these indeed! not without
Meaning,

Nor boding Good. But whence your Information?

Fort. Your Father's Servant *Leonardo* told me,
And said, their Truth none doubted near St. *Briens*.

Glor. Humph! I like it not.—A Chick at once
Produc'd, without an Egg, feather'd and claw'd.
Soon hatch'd it was, and soon receiv'd its Strength.
A bloody Fountain.—A Table smear'd with Blood.—
A Serpent's Carcase.—A Ram brake a Dog's Neck.
Well! murd'rous Deeds will be, and instantly.

The Serpent's Cunning will be brought to Light ;
 Its Body be expos'd ; and the Dog's Impudence
 Be baffled. Then a Cur of female Kind,
 A Shepherd's Cur, with teeming Toad.—Ah, *Fortia* !
 Impending Ruin threatens, and by a Woman,
 Who dangerous Secrets will, I fear, disclose,
 And, by the Poison of a babbling Tongue,
 Draw down Destruction upon all our Heads !—
 But these perhaps are only flying Rumours
 Without Foundation. First, be sure of Facts,
 Then reason from them. But Guilt is full of Fear.
 Oh my *Castrucchio* ! Thee without Guilt and Danger !
 But checker'd must be every human Joy.

Fort. I hope no Danger's near. But *that Castrucchio*
 Must certainly, at last, prove fatal to us.
 Your known unbiass'd Probity of Life,
 Your Reputation clear beyond Suspicion,
 May possibly for some time intercept
 The Sight of Men ; but Curiosity
 Is to our Sex a Quality innate :
 Things of this Nature cannot long escape
 The Reach of female Ken. We must confess,
 Good Father *Paul Raquinto* well supports
 The Person he assumes, seems wond'rous grave,
 And in his Talk makes shew of much Devotion.
 But young he is, and of uncommon Beauty,
 His Manner easy, plump and sleek his Face,
 Not seeming mortify'd in ought but Words.
 Then in his Eyes ; ah Madam ! in his Eyes,
 How plain his eager Sentiment of Soul !
 I oft have wonder'd, Lord *Varini* would
 Allow his Wife a Confessor so young,
 Not disapprove such frequent Conferences,
 Nor be alarm'd that they're so long together,
 And in a Situation so engaging.
 Is it or conscious Merit in himself,
 Or his sublime Opinion of your Virtue ?
 Or does he think an Habit, or Designation
 To sacred Office, will exempt the Man

From

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From human Passions ? Something of this Nature
Must cast a Mist before his Eyes at present:
But Light at last will through it force its Way,
And with it Rage, hot Fury, and Revenge.
'Tis said the *Spaniard* stabs : The *German* beats
The Wife of dubious Fame : By secret Poison
Our Lords of *Italy* convey her hence:
The honest *English-Man*,—good easy Soul,
The honest *English-Man*,—does not believe it.
An *English-Man*, your Father us'd to say
Was open-hearted, generous, brave, and free,
So lov'd, and so admir'd his own dear Person,
As not to think his Wife could entertain
A secret Wish for any Man but he :
The Women fair, of boundless Liberty,
Yet not more fair than chaste ; that if, in more
Than twice ten hundred thousand, *one* should chance
To tread awry, her Husband was the last
That heard of it, nor then gave Credit to it ;
That odious Wretch th' Informer ne'er forgave,
But fought, or left him to his Wife's Resentment.
Not so our Chiefs of *Italy*. Their Jealousy
Is Rage indeed, not pacify'd by Blood,
Kills all concern'd, then preys upon itself.
If then your Life, if then *Castrucchio's* Life
Be worth preserving, repent and sin no more.
Be not displeas'd ; your faithful *Fortia* pardon,
Who, tho' in equal Danger, small Concern
Feels but for you alone. Oh ! permit me
To rouse th' inherent Virtue of your Soul.
How honour'd and esteem'd was *Gloriana* ?
In what Repute the Countess of *Varini* ?
Must all this Blaze go out with an ill Savour ?
Must she die infamous, and leave behind her
A Name accurst, her Family's Disgrace,
Her Husband's Ruin, her Father's Overthrow,
Castrucchio's !—Ah ! I must not name the Thing.
But lo ! The Source of our approaching Misery.

SCENE II.

Enter Frier Paul Raquinto. Exit Fortia.

Raq. THE Eye with seeing's never satisfy'd.
 A Truth most certain. But in nothing more
 Apparent is that Truth, than when we gaze on
 The Person that we most intensely love.
 I've seen the proud Remains of ancient *Rome*,
 And th' azure Cope of Heaven spangled with Stars;
 I've seen in Summer's Morn the Sun emit
 Its burnish'd Beams, and th' Earth bestrew'd with Pearl:
 But all that vast Variety of Objects
 The Eye contents not, it still calls for more:
 But when I gaze on *Gloriana's* Face,
 I'm fix'd in Admiration. Th' Object satisfies,
 But th' Eye's ne'er satisfy'd with looking on't.
 That strange attractive Force! What is't? And why?
 Would I deface that lovely Set of Features?
 Would I ingulph and near my trembling Heart,
 Place them, there ruminate, transmute, unite,
 And make them one with my own proper Substance?
 That wondrous Sweetness! Oh! I could gaze for ever.

Glor. My Hand I gave *Varini*, but my Heart
 Had long been pre-engag'd; which Separation
 Of Things by Nature join'd, has such a Tumult
 Rais'd in my Breast, as nothing can assuage
 But Death. For now Experience teaches me,
 Experience that gives Wisdom e'en to Fools,
 That would we pass this Stage of Life with Comfort,
 Our principal Regard sh^{ou}ld be to chuse
 A fit Companion, one that can alleviate,
 Amuse, chear, solace, as Occasion offers;
 For those who thus are fortunately sort'd,
 Not Roads molest, nor Weather incommodes:
 But when *happ'd in* for Life with Help unmeet,
 How heavily drags on the dire Machine?
 Deep, dreary, dismal, is the Way: The Passengers
 Gall'd,

Gall'd, fretful, tender; so that every Jolt,
 Each Shock, with double Vigour wounds the Soul.
 No pleasing Prospects intervene: The Linnet
 Ne'er trails his Wing, ne'er sportive woos his Mate:
 Nor chants the Nightingale his amorous Lay.
 Ah! may you never feel the fatal Anguish,
 The fore Regret, the griping Pangs that flow
 From an imprudent Choice; Pangs that abbreviate
 The Term of Life allow'd to happier Mortals.
 In all Appearance prudent was my Choice;
Varini's Person, Fortune, Understanding,
 His Family, his Temper, beyond Exception;
 His Tenderness for me and Love extream.
 But tho' thus Honour, Interest, Prudence, Duty,
 Conspir'd to raise *Raquinto* from my Bosom,
 He still retain'd the full Possession of it,
 And reign'd sole Monarch there.

Raq. My dearest Angel! for such a Declaration,
 So undisguis'd, should I attempt t' express
 My Sense of Gratitude, th' Attempt would prove
 I neither understood the Force of Language,
 Nor your just Merit, nor my Obligations.

Glor. Things are not always what they seem, *Raquinto*;
 We look not far before us. Our Attention
 Is so taken up by something near at Hand,
 That what's e'en naturally connected with it
 Escapes our Notice. The greedy Glutton thus
 Extends his Arm, the poinant Sauces laves,
 Nor thinks he Scurvy, Cholic, Dropsy, Gout
 Imbibes, and Death in every Shape of Horror.
 Thus you too *that* an Obligation call,
 Whose very Essence is Iniquity,
 And its Appendents Infamy and Ruin.
 My Soul's internal Bent and Tendency
 I've openly declar'd. But 'tis too late.
 My Person is another's. Those fatal Words
 I WILL have 'scap'd my Lips—the Church bears Wit-
 ness,—

Are gone aloft,—are register'd in Heaven.

But

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But oh! how great the Conflict in my Breast,
The Anguish how extream! (th' Amusement o'er
Which Change at first afforded) when I began
To recollect the lasting Bar I'd fix'd
'Twixt me and all I held most dear. A Sorrow
That menac'd Death ensu'd, you interven'd,
Held back its Hands, protracted the sad Hour.
But—Worse the Remedy than the Disease.

Raq. Ah, say not so, my dearest: Was that the Case;
Did I cause Grief; did I increase Affliction;
Did I add Weight to *Gloriana's* Woe,
I should indeed be most compleatly miserable.
For I'm incapable of any Joy
Wherein she does not share; nor do I wish
To breath ethereal Air, but as a Means
To make her happy. How languid is my Speech,
How disproportion'd to my inward Feel,
When I affirm, I would expose my Life
To any sort of Danger in her Service?

Glor. I thank you, and believe your Passion real,
As mine is. 'Tis the Nature of true Love,
In generous Minds, to generate its like.
Yet I must tell you, and do still insist on't,
That tho', when Grief and pensive Melancholy
Had brought me to the Verge of Death, you came
To my Assistance, it was out of Season,
And worse the Remedy than the Disease.
What then I underwent indeed was grievous,
Impair'd my Health, and boded speedy Death.
But who can tell? A languishing Distemper
Might different Thoughts infuse, dispel the Cloud
That hover'd o'er my Soul, and give a Turn,
A Turn more pure, to my Imagination.
Or, if my Span of Life had ended there,
Why, then I'd not my Innocence surviv'd;
And now again, this second Truth I've learn'd,
By that aforesaid Pedagogue of Fools
Experience, that such is th' intrinsic Worth
Of Innocence, that all Things here below

Bear

Bear no Proportion to it ; but if set
 In adverse Scale, would lightly kick the Beam.
 Sickness and Pain are common Ills, derive
 From Guilt their Force, and thence has Death its Sting.
 You've then, upon the whole, no Cure effected,
 But added to, and lengthen'd the Disease.
 And as to Obligations laid on you,
 Do Guilt and Danger merit such a Name ?
 I'm sure, the Time of Recompence is near.
 Such Horrors in my Soul, such Apprehensions
 Are not without a real, tho' latent, Cause.
 It is, it doubtless is, the Spirit benign
 Of some commiserating Friend deceas'd,
 That thus communicates itself with mine ;
 Perhaps my pious Mother's, that sees and grieves at
 The wayward Wand'rings of her wretched Daughter :
 Perhaps 'tis th' Angel to whose careful Guidance
 I was, when born, peculiarly committed,
 That warns me thus t'escape impending Ruin.
 Ye Ministers of Grace ! and will ye yet
 Not 'sdain Communion with a Soul like mine ?
 Your Attribute's Compassion. Great my Thanks ;
 Fix'd my Resolves ; and my Repentance real.
 Be gone, *Raquinto*. See my Face no more.
 With Speed quit *Venice*, and leave me to my Destiny ;
 But fail not in your Memory to retain
 These Truths, in future Days, should *Gloriana*
 Become the Object of your Thoughts ; that she
 Reluctantly offended : Was not in Principle
 Abandon'd : Not in Soul corrupt : That Love,
 That Fever most malign, when wrongly plac'd,
 Had overpower'd her Reason : Impute to that
 Her Failings : Then let Pity, if not Love,
 Possess your Soul. Once more I say quit *Venice*.
 Adieu for ever.

[Exit.

Raq. The Qualms of this good Lady ! Her Soul it
 seems
 Remains still pure ; her Principles untainted ;
 Her Will disclaiming what her Deeds allow.

This

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This is indeed her Case ; hence in her Bosom
 A Sort of civil Discord, which I've observ'd,
 Before observ'd, but never with such Vehemence.
 I find I must her *Principles* attack,
 I must root up those Obstacles to Peace ;
 And when that's done.—*Varini*, guard thyself ;
 For ten *Varini's* sooner I'd dispatch
 Than quit or *Venice*, or not see her Face.
 But it might prejudice my Views, should I
 Leave her too long alone in such a Temper.
 I'll after her. And tho' the cover'd Embers
 Of former Virtue seem to glow afresh ;
 And tho' her Fears to an unusual Height
 Have risen, and like a Flood o'erwhelm'd her Soul ;
 Yet as her Heart's still mine, I dread not Numbers,
 How us'd foe'er to Vict'ry. Let go the Reins.
 Fall back. Make Way. I say against the *Field*
 LOVE and RAQUINTO.

He gallops off the Stage.



ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter VARINI.

Var. **H**E that's to Day a King shall die to-morrow,
 Is a sad Truth, which in their several Periods,
 Each Monarch must experience, and make good,
 In his own royal Person. Such th' Inconstancy
 Of Things below. But Changes are not wrought
 By Death alone. Ten thousand Accidents
 May blast the best establish'd Peace of Man.
 And such is our hard Hap, that besides Pain,
 And Sicknefs, Poverty, Contempt, and Death,
 Peculiar Ills have their peculiar Avenues
 To every single Person, Ills which others
 Have not the bare Conception of. As who

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That

THE ITALIAN HUSBAND. 17

That knows *Varini*, views his Equipage,
 His grand Retinue, Variety of Seats
 At *Venice* and elsewhere, sees Health auspicious
 Residing on his Countenance, considers
 The Power his Wealth and Station give him; and
 How he's not lowest in the Roll of Honour;
 Who that reflects on these, and many other
 Apparent Means of Happiness, would think
Varini suffers more than human Ills?
 But so it is, the same *Varini*, who,
 Few Moments past, conceiv'd himself in Paradise,
 Nor would have chang'd his State with Eastern Monarchs;
 Is now become a piteous Wretch indeed.
 Oh! can the Universe itself contain
 A Thing more odious, or worthy more Contempt,
 Than self-applauding Pride in human Minds?
 Must it not yield indignant Mirth to Beings
 Of Rank superior, to see the airy Bubble
 Swell, and scud o'er its little filthy Lake,
 In full Career meet with a Straw,—and vanish?
 But who, not deeply learn'd in human Nature,
 Could once have thought Felicity like mine,
 Built on so firm a Basis, could be shook
 By such a Spell as this; by three bare Words.

Looking upon a Letter.

And those upon the Backside of a Letter,
 The Fragment of a Scroll? But here's the Stroke
 That fells my tow'ring Joys, and lays them waste;
 'Tis my Wife's Hand, I found it in her Chamber,
 To SEIGNIOR CASTRUCCHIO. And if, in Truth,
 Thou interlopes, good Seignior *Castrucchio*,
 Full dearly thou shalt pay for't. Thy Blood alone
 Shall not suffice; such Vengeance will I take,
 As shall congeal the Blood of those that hear on't.
 An *Englishman*, they say, if once convinc'd
 His Wife has gone astray, a Challenge sends
 To the Transgressor. Dull tramontain Fool!
 A Villain makes me infamous. Steals a Jewel
 I valued more than all the World besides.

C

With

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With Anguish fills my Heart, transfers the Fortune,
The Power, the Dignity of the *Varini*
To base-born Strangers. Even the odious Bastard
Of him I hate as Hell, must be my Heir,
And for such cruel, base, insidious Treatment,
Without Offence from me, am I to fight him?
T'expose my own bare Bosom, give him room
His Injuries to perfect in my Murder?
And set the Whore at Liberty for him?
Not so unwise, not so unjust to himself
Is the *Italian*, nor so basely honourable.
He in the Dark attacks me innocent,
Nor shall the injurious Villain know who hurts him.

Enter Fortia.

This I'm resolv'd. But *Fortia* comes this Way.
She knows the Truth, and I must know it too
Before we part, by Threats, or gentle Means.
I am, good Seigniora *Fortia*, yours.

Going up to Fortia.

Fort. My Lord! *Curtfying low.*

Var. How does your Lady, how does *Gloriana*?

Fort. I hope, much better since she came to *Venice*.
She grows more gay, her Colour has regain'd,
Nor is in Spirits defective. *Rialto's* Air
Has more effected than all th' Art of Physick.

Var. Aye. Th' Air and something else has Wonders
wrought,

Such Wonders as I never apprehended.
But *Fortia*, is she honest? has regain'd
Her Health by virtuous Means? forbidden Paths
Not trod; nor follow'd an illicit Practice?

Fort. Plain Sense, my Lord, I understand not Riddles.

Var. And plain Sense thou shalt hear, not Riddles,
Fortia.

I say then, she's a Whore, and thou her Pimp,
Procurefs, Go-between, her Doctor-fetcher,
Good Doctor *All-beal*, who has often put
The Blush upon her Cheeks, and given such Proofs,—
Such

Such pregnant Proofs—of his Abilities,
As will, in less than ten revolving Moons,
His Art's undoubted Efficacy shew.
But, *Fortia*, by St. *Francis* I declare,
If thou'lt not tell the Truth without Disguise,
Thy Soul I will dislodge, and hew thy Body
Into ten thousand Pieces, and will make thee
A sad Example to all other Bawds.

Fort. Threatnings, my Lord, the Innocent despise,
As I do. If you kill, the Guilt is yours :
And so, e'er long, will be the Punishment.
And you're the only Man, the first Time this,
My Lady's Character was call'd in Question.
Oh Virtue ! oh Purity ! how weak, how frail
Is your Defence, when foul calumnious Tongues
Can reach, and pierce, the Countess of *Varini* ?

Var. These Exclamations are of no Significance,
But to evince you share with her in Guilt :
Or else, that so her Person you esteem,
As to conceal her Faults, tho' with the Loss
Of your own Reputation. But, gentle *Fortia*,
I of your Guilt have only bare Suspicion,
No solid Proof : but of your Lady's, *Fortia*,
Her Hand is Witness ; her own Hand does testify
Her Guilt, and my Undoing, look at it, *Fortia*.—

Shewing her the Letter.

The Superscription read—you know the Hand,
To Signior *Castrucchio*.—Here, take this Purse,

Offering her his Purse,

'Tis yours, the Earnest of a larger Sum,
And of my pardoning you, if Accessary
In her foul Crimes, provided you tell Truth,
The Truth entire, and nothing but the Truth.
You see, I know too much to rest in Quiet,
Suspense is Death. Let me, oh ! let me know
The whole Extent of her perfidious Baseness ;
Or else, I swear by all that's just and good,
If by another Hand I know thy Crime,
No Devil can torment thee worse than I will,

20 THE ITALIAN HUSBAND.

But take this Purse I say, and tell me plainly,
If you *Castrucchio* know, his Quality,
His Person, and Abode; and where, and when,
Commenc'd so strict Familiarity
'Twixt him and my good Spouse.

Fort. My Lord, I *Gloriana* serv'd at *Vernon*.

Taking the Purse.

I serv'd her faithfully, and lov'd her well;
And truly she deserv'd it, for never Woman,
In Mind and Body equal'd *Gloriana*.
About Nineteen, at *Mafs*, *Castrucchio* saw her,
His Family genteel, his Person graceful,
His Age 'bout Twenty-three, his Fortune mod'rate;
He saw and lov'd, declar'd it, and was lov'd
With equal Passion.
Your Lordship interven'd, *Castrucchio's* Equal
In Person; but in Quality and Fortune
Superior far to him. And sordid Avarice,
Or dire Ambition, and the Views of Grandeur,
A Father's harsh Commands, or soft Entreaties,
Sway'd her on your Side to declare. Your Nuptials
Were solemniz'd, *Castrucchio* sicken'd on't,
Became consumptive, and was sent to *Padua*
Physicians to consult. Lady *Varini*
Mean Time was gay, and liv'd in great Magnificence.
But e'er twelve Months were gone about, you know
She pensive grew, and courted Solitude.
You know what Means were us'd, but all in vain,
For still she visibly declin'd in Health.
At last 'twas thought adviseable to come
To *Venice*, to see what Change of Air would do,
And to amuse her with Variety.
And here she soon her Chearfulness retriev'd,
And Liveliness of Temper. And you, my Lord,
She seem'd to love with an uncommon Ardour.
But oh! my Lord, permit the sad Occasion
For ever to lie buried in Oblivion:
Your Peace consult, and make no further Search;
Command me hence, and seal my Tongue in Silence;

For

For all beyond is a tumultuous Sea,
Will overwhelm yourself, and *Gloriana*,
In utter Ruin, absolute Perdition.

Var. Go on I charge thee, *Fortia*, speak the worst,
Nor can the worst keep Pace with my Suspicions,
Nor known, cause greater Anguish than I feel
At present.

Fort. My Lord, with great Reluctance I obey :
Hear then, but be prepar'd, and flint your Soul.
Not many Days had we at *Venice* been,
Before *Castrucchio* had an Interview
With *Gloriana* ; the Means and Manner thus :
At the *Franciscans* Church, before the Altar,
He saw her kneeling, close by her Side he kneel'd,
Whisper'd his Love, and her Inconstancy.
She bid him next Day meet her there again.
He did so. She into his Hands convey'd
A Letter, certifying when you'd go
From *Venice* to *St. Briens* Castle, when,
He might in Safety, her a Visit make,
And be admitted by the Postern Door.
You went. He came. And I admitted him.
Pardon, my Lord, for such was her Command.
And here commenc'd their Crimes, as oft repeated,
As Opportunity would give them Leave.
The Cause why he to *Venice* came, I know not,
But I believe, the Countess had no Hand in't.
But there he was, healthy and strong as ever,
And such the Consequence. And thence her Gaiety,
Her Flow of Spirits thence, and wond'rous Fondness,
Unusual Fondness for your Lordship. A Blind
To hide her Guilt, and criminal Amours.

Var. In Youth and Inexperience, so much Art !
Damn'd Hypocrite ! Who once could have imagin'd,
Such seeming Innocence, and Truth, and Love,
Could harbour such rank Lust and Perfidy ?
But me, 'twas rather that was inexperience'd,
A Dupe in more Respects than one, not knowing
The Nature or of Man, or of this World,

That

That here could dream of Happiness, a Fruit
 This Soil produces not, or won't preserve
 For any Length of Time. We're here but Pilgrims,
 This World an Inn, and its Accommodations
 Well suiting hasty Passengers; but yet
 Not as we wish, not such as should, in Reason,
 Wean our Affections from our native Home:
 For e'en its Wine's not pure; if it exhilarates,
 A wambling Nausea lags not far behind.
 Thus, did her Health ingross my very Soul,
 Was all my Care, the utmost of my Wish;
 Would Heaven guard that, I almost thought myself
 Beyond the Reach of ought could give Disquiet:
 'Twas granted; she grew well: But such the Terms,
 As will for ever fill my Heart with Woe.
 The Lot of hapless Man! The present never
 Administers Content. There's Something wanting:
 Could we that absent Something but obtain,
 We should be truly blest'd: That Something comes
 And brings its Load along with it, a Load
 Oppressive, galling, and extends our View
 To other Wants we never apprehended;
 Had no Idea, no Conception of.
 I lov'd her, *Fortia*, with as pure a Passion,
 As ever enter'd human Breast. The Ground,
 The very Ground she trod, I thought distinguish'd
 From common Mould. And then that Tenderness,
 Regard, Respect, wherewith I ever treated her,
 Thyself art Witness. Yet such the Recompence,
 Such the Return, the Gratitude I meet with.
 Henceforth let no Man hope by gentlest Usage
 To fix a Woman's Love. A Suitableness
 Of Disposition, not to be defin'd,
 Is that alone can rivet their Affections.
 Thus *Hippia* left her Spouse, a *Roman* Senator,—
 Left her Sister,—her weeping Babes,—left *Rome*,—
 With all its gay Diversions,—to run away with
 A common Gladiator,—
 And he not young,—a Tumour on his Nose,—

His

His Face with Scars deform'd, and ever-dripping Eyes.

Again, *Faustina*, in yet higher Life,

Rome's Empress, lov'd another Gladiator;

Tho' wedded to the godlike *Antonine*,

Great, learned, wise, and just, the best of Men.

And I'm persuaded *Hippia* still would love

Her Gladiator, tho' decrepit grown,

With trembling Nerves, and Nose distilling Rheum:

And would when helpless, peevish, and morose,

With anxious Care, and Diligence attend him.

For Woman varies, when indifferent,

But when once truly fix'd, is fix'd for ever.

E'en as the circling Vane, when newly made,

Whirls round with every gentle Blast of Wind,

But rusts at last, and fixes to a Point.

But our *Italian* Strictness o'er our Females,

Does not permit to understand their Tempers,

Till we have ty'd th' indissoluble Knot.

In *England*, where more Liberty's allow'd,

Due Caution us'd, they have it in their Power

To chuse an Help more meet for their Condition,

A Temper more adapted to their own:

And Oh! had mine with *Gloriana's* suited,

She ne'er had Falshood known, nor Anguish I.

But go on, *Fortia*, finish the Detail

Of her's, and curs'd *Castrucchio's* Practices.

Fort. Her Height of Spirits, Gaiety, and Love,

Apparent Love for you, my Lord, continu'd,

Whilst you, at proper Intervals, retir'd

To *Briens* Castle, leaving her at *Venice*;

For in your Absence she receiv'd *Castrucchio*.

But when your constant stay at *Venice* hinder'd

These Meetings, she again began to droop,

Grew pensive, wan, not capable of Joy.

'Twas then thought fit, a ghostly Father should

Be call'd to her Assistance. And Frier *Paul*

Raquinto was the Man.—*Raquinto*

None other really was, than base *Castrucchio*,

In

24 THE ITALIAN HUSBAND.

In Friars Garb, in which he hitherto
Has free Admittance found, without Suspicion.
And thus things are at present ; and now, my Lord,
You know the Truth entire, and nought but Truth.

Var. I thank thee, *Fortia* ; thou hast told a Tale,
I never shall forget. And now be gone.

But take along with thee this Caution, *Fortia*,
Not to disclose one Word of this our Converse,
Nor drop one distant Hint to *Gloriana*

That I suspect her. As thou regards my Favour,
As thou regards thy Life, be silent, *Fortia*.

Fort. I will, my Lord, be silent as the Grave.

[*Exit Fortia.*

Var. Thus she mine Eyes ne'er saw without Delight,
My Heart's big Joy ; whose Father gave her to me,
Who gave herself, with solemn Protestations,
In Presence of th' Altar, 'fore God and Man,
To be entirely mine, and only mine,
Becomes a meer Highway, admits the Tread
Of every reeking foul ill-scented Foot ;
Neglects fair Honour's Love, forgets her Vows,
And sinks into a Whore, *Castrucchio's* Whore.
Thus, happy was the first of human Race,
Lord of the Whole below ; nor Sickness felt,
Nor Pain, nor anxious Care. About him smil'd
The whole Creation. And to compleat his Joys,
Possess'd the Woman that he dearly lov'd :
But to the Brim his Cup of Joy when full,
An interloping Devil overturn'd :
And such a Devil art thou, *Castrucchio*.
And dost thou vainly hope Vengeance t'escape ?
In *Venice* was there none, in *Italy*—
Amongst the Thousands which the World produces,
Was there not one, in her own Power, could please thee ?
Thou hadst the World to range in, would none serve
But mine espous'd, my Property, *Castrucchio* ?
That Fruit belong'd to me by Right divine,
Confirm'd by fair Consent, secur'd by Law.

And

THE ITALIAN HUSBAND. 25

And know, *Castruccio*, tho' I could not guard it
From the sly, silent, unsuspected Thief,
Yet when he's found, I can severely punish him.
[Rings a Bell.]

S C E N E II.

Enter Sturio.

Var. Sturio !

Stur. My Lord !

Var. 'Tis now about the Space of twice seven Years,
I think, since first you came to live with me ;
And I, with as much Truth as Pleasure say,
I never found you, all that Time, or negligent,
Or guilty of Unfaithfulness, in ought
That did concern my Int'rest or my Honour.

Stur. 'Tis an uncommon Happiness, my Lord,
That my Endeavours such to you should seem,
As they in my Intentions really were.

Var. But, Sturio, then besides your being faithful,
I know you're likewise brave, and have experienc'd it.
When in our Travels betwixt *Rome* and *Naples*,
Near *Tarracina* four Banditti met us,
With full Intent of Robbery and Murder ;
My *Sturio* then I saw, without Dismay
Wielding his Sword with equal Skill and Courage,
Till we had two laid prostrate at our Feet,
And made the rest precipitately fly.
Thenceforth I've look'd upon you as a Friend,
Try'd, and found faithful, and as such have us'd you.

Stur. This Recollection seems, my Lord, I fear,
T' infer some late Default in me. But this,
My Lord, I'm certain of, 'tis undesign'd
Whate'er it be. Your Favours I acknowledge ;
Have Gratitude at Heart ; make what Returns
Are in my Power to make. And if in ought
I yet can serve you, command, and think 'tis done.

Var. I thank you, Sturio ; I have no Intention
D T'upbraid

26 THE ITALIAN HUSBAND.

T'upbraid you with Neglects of any Kind.
Your worthy Qualities I only mention,
Having now Occasion for their farther Use.
Get ready then a Brace of Pistols, *Sturio*,
And charge them; for this Night we go tow'rds *Briens*,
Not really go, but only in Pretence.

Stur. May I presume to ask why in Pretence?

Var. My whole Design I will acquaint you with
In Time convenient, as tis fit I should,
As I shall want your Help in th' Execution.
But here your Lady comes. Get all Things ready;

(*Enter Gloriana.*)

Then call the Gondolier, and let me know.

[*Exit Sturio.*]

S C E N E III.

Glor. You would not go from Home to Night, my Lord?

Var. Why, if I should, my Dear, it would not be
The first Night you've, without me, pass'd in Pleasure.
For our *Venetian* Wives are better taught,
When their good Spouses kindly go from Home,
Than to consume their Nights in Solitude,
In Sleep, or pining for their absent Lords.

Glor. How other Wives behave I neither know,
Nor am concern'd about; but this I know,
Since Fate, and my good Fortune, made me yours,
I ne'er could part with you without Regret.

Var. Ah! *Glori!* was there but a stricter Union
'Twixt Woman's Words and Deeds, the marry'd State
Would be a State of Happiness indeed.

Glor. I hope, my Lord, I never gave you Reason,
To Tax me with discordant Words and Deeds:
Or my Sincerity to call in Question.

Var. Why no—My Dear,—Sincerity's a Thing
In—every Body's *Mouth*.—Who *talks* not of it?

Sincerity!

Sincerity !—Why, who does not reproach
The odious Wretch that wants Sincerity ?—
And yet 'tis true, Sincerity's a Jewel
Worth more by th' Ounce than Rubies rarely met with.
But your fair Breast's so rich a Cabinet,
That one would swear 'twas fram'd to hold that Jewel,
On Purpose fram'd.—But yet there's little Confidence
To be repos'd in most delicious Outsides.
At holy *Rome*, even in *St. Peter's Church*,
What strikes you most, the grandest, fairest Object
Contains within it Rottenness and Stench.

Glor. I make no doubt, my Lord, but you've a
Meaning,

Which, when you please t'explain, perhaps even I
Shall have Abilities to comprehend.

Var. Madam, it may be so; but powerful Time
Will that, and other latent Things discover.
But, Madam, has it never to your Mind
Occurr'd, what great Events have been produc'd,
As well to publick States, as private Persons,
By seeming Trifles, light as fleeting Air ?
A long neck'd Hern takes Wing; Is it of Moment
Which Way she turns her Flight? can it be thought
Whole Families of Note may owe their Ruin,
Or great Felicity, to such an Accident ?
That thence, that from an Act, in all Appearance
So perfectly indifferent, should depend
A Chain of Causes highest Joy producing,
Or most intense, unalterable Woe ?
But so it is, my Dear; and we ourselves,
Without going farther for Examples, prove it.
As on a certain Day, the Fields I travers'd
With other Gentlemen, upon my Wrist
Bearing a Falcon, we perceiv'd an Hern,
With long expanded Wings, labouring her Way
Across the liquid Air. I soon directed
The Falcon to his Prey; with Speed he rose,
Pursu'd, o'ertook, engag'd in dubious Battle,
And brought at last the tumbling Quarry down:

28 THE ITALIAN HUSBAND.

Your Father's Garden was the Place they fell in ;
 My Hawk I hasten'd to preserve, and there
 Your Father found, invited, entertain'd us ;
 Hence our Acquaintance sprang ; here first I saw
Berinto's beauteous Daughter, saw and lov'd :
 You need not to be told what after follow'd :
 And she it was, that first convinc'd me Happiness
 Was an original Essence, had a true Being,
 And was a positive and real Good.
 Not wholly negative : Not Indolence :
 Not Vacancy of Ill : Stability,
 And an Exemption from the Fear of Change,
 Would me have elevated to a Pitch
 Not much inferior to the Bless'd above.
 But now I know, tho' Happiness be real,
 It is not long design'd for Mortals here.
 But pray, my Dear, observe : the Hern enjoy'd
 Th' Etherial Plain alone, intent on Booty,
 Not apprehending Danger. Th' Hawk at length
 Him headlong hurl'd, check'd his aspiring Views,
 And put a Stop to's farther Depredations.
 And something hence portentous ancient Augury
 Would probably deduce : But Time will shew.

Enter Sturio.

Stur. The Gondolier, my Lord, attends your Pleasure,
 And every Thing you order'd is in Readiness.

[*Exit Sturio.*

Glor. And must you go, my Lord, set out so late,
 Cannot your Journey be deferr'd till Morning ?

Var. 'Tis Business calls, I must away to *Brien*.
 In three Days Space, perhaps, I may return.
 Mean Time should Signior *Boracchio* call,
 You know the Lawyer, help him to those Parchments
 That in my Closet lie. Here take the Key.

Gives her a Key.

Glor. Since Fate will have it so, fly fast ye Moments,
 And to my longing Arms restore my Love.

Var.

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Var. May Heaven have under its peculiar Care
Sincerity, fair Innocence and Truth. [*Exit Varini.*]

Glor. He's gone, in such a Humour gone, as I
Ne'er saw him in before. Is it th' Affair
That calls him hence that sours him? Or does he
Suspect that all's not right? Has Jealousy
Transfix'd his Brain? How indirect his Talk?
How Wives behave when Husbands go from Home.
What Strefs he laid upon the Word Sincerity?
The Hawk the Hern destroy'd. Is he sagacious,
Of quicker Sight, of greater Penetration
Than we imagine? And must *Castrucchio* fall
A Victim to his Fury and my Love?
It must not be.—But how shall we prevent it,
Since he's determin'd not t'absent himself
From *Venice*, or from me? Alas, how weak
Are our Resolves when Love's in th' adverse Camp!
But hold—Suppose *Castrucchio* should strike first,
And rid me of this Bar to every Joy?—
Or is there not a Way more secret?—A Potion!—
A gentle Potion sheds no Blood.—To Hell,
Ye impious Thoughts! To Hell! from whence you
spring.

Oh baleful Vice! how intricate thy Ways?
When I deserted Virtue, I lost Peace.
But such Behaviour will not bear strict Scrutiny;
And I have gone too far to stand still now;
Vice draws on Vice, and to conceal one Crime
We're often forc'd to perpetrate ten more.
Ah me! How great should be our Circumspection,
When one loose Look oft terminates in Murder!
But as *Varini* kindly has allow'd me
Three Days to weigh this Matter in, I'll send
Once more for my *Castrucchio*; this Chagrin
He'll soon remove, then we'll deliberate,
What Course is best, and safest to be taken.

[*Exit.*]

A C T



A C T IV. S C E N E I.

SCENE *the Street before Varini's House.**Enter Castrucchio and Mellinto, as in Conversation.*

Cast. **E** N V Y, *Mellinto*, meer Envy, nothing else;
 You cannot bear that others should enjoy
 Those Pleasures you yourselves are past enjoying.
 Malignity of Years, worn out with Lust,
 Cries out with doleful Din, Vexation,—Vanity :—
 And so it rings the Changes, All is vain.

Mell. And thus it is that Men deceive themselves,
 Because they love to be deceiv'd. But pray,
Castrucchio, who so likely to perceive
 The Inconveniences of Things, as those
 Who've prov'd, and had the full Experience of them ?
 Have you ne'er seen with what indignant Rage
 The fierce, unruly, wayward Babe's with-held
 From grasping glowing Iron ? How it struggles,
 Resents the barbarous Treatment, frowns, exclaims
 Against is *old* malignant Counsellor,
 That keeps him back from Pain most exquisite,
 And will not suffer him to be a Cripple ?
 Just so we despicable old Men warn you,
 To shun that Fire ourselves have suffer'd by :
 You laugh, despise our Counsel, seize and suffer,
 Then kindly turn yourselves Advisers ; meet
 With like Returns. And thus the Race of Fools
 Continues. And to-day with equal Lustre
 Shines as did yesterday, and will to-morrow.

Cast. Why, then 'tis my Day yet to *feel*, *Mellinto* ;
 If I too hot should find it, who can tell
 But I, to-morrow, may turn Counsellor ?

Mell.

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Mell. But won't to-morrow be too late, *Castrucchio*?
To-morrow's Wife-men are a numerous Herd
That ne'er will see to-morrow.

Cast. Read that, *Mellinto*, ponder the Contents,
Gives him a Letter.

Form to yourself the lovely Hand that wrote it,
My Years consider, my Habitude of Body,
Then who'd be wise to-day, as you call Wisdom?

(*Mellinto* reads.)

*My Husband this Evening goes into the Country, where
he designs to stay for three Days. I have much to say to
you that highly concerns us both. Pray make what haste
you can; for the sooner I see you, the sooner, and longer,
shall I be happy in the Company of my dear, my dear
Castrucchio.*

(*Mellinto* gravely returns the Letter.)

Cast. Beauty itself, and an Excess of Love,
Of Love reciprocal, *Mellinto*, calls me.
Now, I suppose, your Wisdom would advise me
To send her Word, t' apply to the Holy Virgin
For powerful Aid, to purify her Soul;
To drop her Beads; to fast; to turn her Thoughts
On her good Husband; and to wait with Patience
Her Lord's Return; with other holy Geer.

Mell. You want not Sense, *Castrucchio*, nor Discretion,
Nor Probity of Mind, in any Case
Where this impetuous Passion interferes not.
I lov'd your Father, was your Father's Friend,
Esteem *Castrucchio*, as a Youth by Nature
For great Atchievements form'd, can he but 'scape
The soft Allurements of illicit Lust.
More hoary Winters have gone o'er my Head,
I've seen the sad Effects, have read, have heard of
Examples dire, and wond'rous Devastations
That Fire has made; and I would speak, *Castrucchio*,
I would advise, but *Scoffers* never listen,—
Give no Attention,—never hear Reproof.—

Cast.

32 THE ITALIAN HUSBAND.

Cast. Father *Mellinto* speak, and I will hear you
With all the Seriousness the soft Idea
Of this delicious Woman will permit :
And I can stay to hear ; for greater Darkness
Is better suited to my gay Designs.

Mell. Darkness, in Truth, best suits the Deed,
Castruccio,

That you're about ; but Darkness cannot hide
From him you most should dread, who trait'rous
Deeds,

And Acts of Wrong, of Robbery, and Lewdness
Detests ; and will avenge with Stripes severe.

You know the Woman's marry'd ; this curs'd Letter
Declares her Husband's gone from Home. She's
marry'd !

Reflect on that ! she's marry'd !——

Cast. Why so I do, *Mellinto*, and reflect
That there are great Conveniences in Marriage :
If ought should happen, why, there's a Father ready.
No Reputation lost. No forc'd Abortions.
No secret Dealings with commodious Women.
The fair one whines not. No Parents break their Hearts.
No talk of broken Vows. No private Murders.
No Family Resentments. No foolish Brother
To strut and to look saucy with--What do you mean, Sir ?
But yesterday I met an *English* Gentleman,
Who mention'd an Affair that lately happen'd
'Mongst his Acquaintance : thus ;

Young *Strephon* long had lov'd the beauteous *Cloe*,
Had made assiduous Courtship, was accepted,
All Things were settled, and to-morrow fix'd
To be the Wedding-Day : This Night he spent with her,
Not idly spent, *Mellinto*. At Morning's Dawn
Took Horse, and ne'er return'd. Her Brother follow'd,
Challeng'd, fought, was kill'd. At nine Months End,
Nine Months of unimaginable Anguish,
With a dead Child dy'd *Cloe*. Her Parents thus
Bereav'd of Son and Daughter, their only Issue,

After

After some Time with broken Hearts expir'd.
Here then, by simple, *harmless* Fornication,
With Circumstances of much Horror, dy'd
Not less than five.

A Widow too, he said, her Quiver fill'd
With three fair Shafts, one Daughter and two Sons;
Seduc'd by flattering Speech, gave up the Rein
To lawless Lust, was pregnant, and deliver'd
In secret; and, to hide her Shame, destroy'd
The hapless Babe. But Murder's seldom suffer'd
Long e'en t'escape the Cognisance of Man.
The piteous Wretch was quickly apprehended,
Convicted, executed, and her Body
Consign'd to roothless Men to be inspected,
Cut, mangled, and with leering Curiosity
Descanted on. Her inoffending Sons,
Not able to endure a Shock so violent,
Their Days determin'd in a neighbouring Pool:
The Daughter left her Country, in hopes to find
Some Place her Mother's Name had ne'er arriv'd at.
Here then again, *one* Act of Fornication
Occasion'd Death to *Four*, with Circumstances
Most dreadful to reflect on; and to a *Fifth*—
Ah me! poor Maid! what Anguish must thou feel?
Why then with such an Emphasis, *Mellinto*,
Remember that she's married?

Mell. By laying such Stress on Marriage, mistake me
not;

I did not mean to recommend Impurity
Of other Kinds. My real Sentence is,
CONTAIN OR WED. And as to Difficulties
In one, or Inconveniences of th' other,
You've neither Time nor Will to hear me speak.
To th' Act impure of *single* Persons then
I'll only say, that all that can be said
In Vindication of them, comes to this,
And nothing more; 'TIS BETTER TO INCUR
DIVINE DISPLEASURE THAN TEMPORAL INCONVENI-
ENCES,

E

And

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And those not real, but imaginary,
 As they *themselves* more squander, more consume,
 Than would with Decency support a *Family*:—
 That such the plain, the oft repeated Rules
 Of holy Faith transgress;—cause much Uneasiness
 To Persons innocent, that ne'er deserv'd
 Such Treatment at their Hands.—That Nature's Law
 They violate, nor so behave tow'rds others,
 As they would others should behave tow'rds them :
 That they corrupt their Minds ;—Give a wrong Bias
 To their Affections —And thus acquire ill Habits ;—
 And run great Hazard of eternal Woe ;—
 As it's a Fault we seldom *can* repent of ;
 For, from Reflection Sorrow comes, from Sorrow
 Repentance. But if here we use Reflection,
 Nature would rather prompt to Repetition :
 If here sad Sorrow springs, it must arise
 From Source divine. But this is not the Case ;
 I say again, remember that she's marry'd,
 And that she's so, *Castruccio* does infer
 Her being another's by strong Affeuerations
 And Promise, made in Places of most Sanctity,
 And before Witnesses of good Repute,
 In Words too the most binding, the most solemn
 Could be devis'd by Men. In Compensation
 For this great Gift, receiv'd by th' Hand of those
 That only could bestow it, herself and Parents,
 The Man secludes himself from other Women,
 And binds himself, in Words of equal Force,
 To her *alone*. Our Guides in Spirituals call it
 A Sacrament ; that is, they know not what ;
 But something of uncommon Sanctity,
 And mighty Obligation.
 But, to leave Words of dubious or no Meaning,
 A Contract 'tis, a Covenant or Vow,
 Conceived in strictest Terms, and executed
 In the most publick, the most solemn Manner,
 To render those that break it inexcusable

As well to *Men*, as to their great Creator.
 He then that makes Infractions in this Case,
 Breaks in upon another's Property,
 Robs, injures, causes Breach of Faith, and tramples
 On Laws divine and human.
 Nor do I doubt but most of the Calamities,
 Great, galling, sore Calamities that happen
 To publick States, to Families, or Persons,
 Have their Original from Wrath divine,
 For foul Pollution, and illicit Lust.

Cast. My Head's too full for Argument at present,
 I can't dispute. Let *Nature* plead for me,
 Give *Sense* her Weight. Let *Appetite* prevail,
 But let me hear 'gainst *three* such Advocates,
 What Reason farther has t'oppose; for I
 Have not consulted *her* in this Affair.

Mell. Castruccio, I believe you. Have Patience then:
 An hasty Shower of Rain in *Lydia* fell,
 'Tis said, which swept away the Soil, and left
 An Hollow, into which one *Gyges* entering,
 Observ'd a brazen Horse, and in its Side
 A secret Door, which opening, to his View
 Expos'd an human Carcase, of a Size
 Unusual, and on its Finger a Ring of Gold,
 Which taking thence, and putting on his Finger,
 He found made him invisible or visible,
 As he in such a Manner plac'd the Ring.
 By th' Aid of this he first seduc'd the Queen,
 And then, by her Assistance, slew the King,
 Then seiz'd the *Lydian* Diadem and reign'd.
 Had you this Ring of *Gyges*, could become,
 Whene'er you pleas'd, invisible to Men;
 Could you with Honour, Honesty, or Conscience,
 Convey yourself into that good Man's Closet,
 Whose Wife you make so free with; and secrete
 His Writings, and his Title to's Estate,
 And forge another Title, the Inheritance
 Of his Domains intailing on your Issue,

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In Bar to's own? Could such an Act, *Castrucchio*,
To any Court in Heaven or Earth appear
Not unjust, not meriting due Vengeance?

Cast. An heinous Act indeed, that merits more
Than th' Halter here. An Act I'd not be guilty of,
For ten times his Possessions, great as they're.

Mell. You'd not be guilty of! Alas! how small
The Sway of Reason o'er the human Mind,
When Passion interferes of any sort!
You'd not be guilty of! Why, what you do,
Involves more Guilt than that twice ten times told.
Suppose a Son, a First-born Son should prove
The Products of your stolen Joys, *Castrucchio*?

Cast. Well put i'faith, the very Case in Hand:
For she's in teeming State, that never teem'd.
Nor do we doubt the happy Cause, *Mellinto*.
My Vigour 'twas atchiev'd the glorious Feast.
Nor yields it small Diversion, to behold
How the good Man grows fonder still and fonder,
As if himself had don't.

Mell. And is not this invisibly to break
His iron Chest? his Writings of Importance
To run away with? and to steal his Title?
And forge another with a dockt Intail?
In Favour of your Bastard, in Prejudice
To his own legal Issue, or next Heirs?
And is not this most damnable Injustice?
Would hanging think you make sufficient Recompence?
To trick a man thus out of his Estate;
To cut off his Posterity; and all
By Blood related to him; and that for ever:
To give it to the Child of him he hates;
Or ought to hate, e'en as the Gates of Hell!
But do you ever think of Death, *Castrucchio*?

Cast. Lord! good *Mellinto*, if you thus proceed,
You'll put such Gravity upon my Face,
That my fair Paramour will think I've been
In melancholy Cave of sage *Trophonius*,

But

But seriously, *Mellinto*, can you think
 A lively lusty Lad of Five and Twenty,
 Would that grim Visage chuse to gaze upon,
 Rather than Things of more engaging Looks,
 And pleasing Aspect?—But pray go on.—
 When I am marry'd, perhaps your Laws may seem
 To have some Weight in them; and be of Use
 To tutor my good Spouse with, or a Son,
 Should he become extravagant in Wenching,
 Or spend more Cash than I should chuse to part with.
 And now I honestly profess, that Death
 Has not been much the Object of my Thoughts.
 Remember Five and Twenty early Days.

Mell. Why, half the human Race ne'er reaches Five,
 Without the Twenty; and Thousands younger far
 Than you, this Moment draw their latest Breath.
 But have you ever seen one die, *Castrucchio*?

Cast. I've seen some pretty near it; 'tis an Object
 Not suiting with my Age or Inclination.

Mell. It is indeed a melancholy Scene;
 But as it is a Part we all must act,
 The last Part too! 'twould well become us often
 To con it o'er, that when our Turn comes on,
 We may behave with suitable Decorum,
 And quit the Stage with Honour and Applause.

In Pain, and restless, to a Bed confin'd,
 Of Life despairing, yet afraid to die;
 To see one's self *peculiarly* mark'd out,
 And sever'd for Destruction, whilst all around
 Goes on as usual; the Sun its Lustre shews,
 Nor do the Birds, for us, their warbling cease.
 In this Distress we cast about for Help,
 But none can find. Our Friends can only pity us.
 Thus th' hunted Deer, by Dogs and Men furrounded,
 Tosses his branchy Head this Way and that,
 To see if ought can help, or Means afford
 For his Escape. In vain: he must submit.

The

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The Herd, mean time, looks on, or bounds the Plain;
Or grazes unconcern'd.

To leave the Light, and all one holds most dear,
To pass the dreary Vale of Death, whose Horrors
None can declare aright. To enter then
A State of Being we've no Conception of
Distinct, nor clearer than the Babe, e'er born,
Had of this mortal Coil we are now incumber'd in:
To sink into Oblivion, be deposited
In the cold Clay alone and solitary.
These Thoughts will give a different Face to Things,
Add Weight to Guilt, and a peculiar Blackness.

The Purity of him that made the Heavens,
His Love of Purity, his Will declar'd
'Gainst all Pollutions of whatever kind:
That we should make our Bodies not a Cage
For Harpies, filthy obscene Birds, to nestle in;
But Temples for a Spirit sedate and pure.
That there are future everlasting Joys,
Or endless Woe extream. These, these are Gems
Of a too radiant Hue, too bright a Lustre,
For Youth, hot Blood, and Lust to look upon.

Cast. Youth is at best, you know, a fading Flower,
That quickly sickens, and that soon will die:
And growing Years, and Wisdom thence ensuing,
Will boiling Blood, and furious Lust assuage.
Lust then may be in th' Head, come down to th' Heart,
But will descend no lower. We then may think,
And wish, and sigh, *Mellinto*, but can't do.

Mell. Thou waggish wanton Youth, undone *Castrucchio*,
Thou Irreclaimable! Yet I'll not leave thee.
If Honour then, nor Honesty, nor Conscience,
Nor Dread of ought hereafter moves thee, think
Of Jealousy, *Italian* Jealousy!
Its Watchfulness, and unrelenting Fury.

Cast. I'm not at leisure now to think of Jealousy;
But should I ought suspect, I may prevent it,
By giving the first Blow, and that effectual.

Mell.

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Mell. Thus you the Wife debauch, and Husband murder.

Cast. Not if he'll let me be with her in quiet,
And I from him no Danger apprehend.
I'll do't but in the Way of Self-Defence.
But th' Hour approaches,—the Hour of fierce Attack,
Of warm and eager Contest. I must be gone.

Mell. The fatted Ox thus, from the Stall let loose,
Throws up his Heels, and rampant scowers the Plain
Exulting, as it Liberty regain'd,
He now at large should range the flowery Meads;
When, poor unthinking Fool, th' uplifted Axe,
The bloody Knife, and Slaughter-House are near:
And such, I fear's thy Case, unhappy Youth.
But since nought I can say avails, first hear
Th' Award of Wisdom from an Eastern Sage,
Then get thee gone, and prove its Verity:
The Man that, breaking Wedlock, faith in's Heart
Who seeth me, compass'd as I am with Darknes?
The Walls my covering are, what need I fear?
'Tis only th' Eyes of Men this Man's afraid of,
It enters not his Mind, that th' Eyes of God
Exceed the Sun ten thousand Times in Brightness;
That he beholds the secret Ways of Men;
Did all Things know before Creation was,
And took a View of them when perfected.
Where such suspected not shall he be caught:
And meet with Vengeance in the publick Streets. [*Exit.*]

Cast. What pleasure take these venerable Sages
In hearing themselves talk? But get thee gone
With all thy Counsel, and ill-boding Wisdom.
'Tis *Gloriana* now fills all my Soul.

Raps at the Door, and is let in by Fortia.

The Curtain falls. The Musick strikes up with something at first mighty gay and sprightly, but ending in a Manner extremely melancholy and solemn.

A C T



A C T V. S C E N E I.

SCENE continues, and dark.

Enter Varini with his Sword drawn, and Sturio with a Pistol in each Hand. Sturio raps at the Door.

Fortia **W**HO's at the Door?
(within.) *Stur. Fortia, 'tis I: My Lord has sent me hither*

*With an important Letter to the Countess,
 Which must be given her without Delay.*

Fort. (within.) I'll go and tell her, and return immediately.

After some time Fortia returns.

Fort. (within.) Give me the Letter, *Sturio*, then retire,

And wait below, till I return an Answer.

Fortia opens the Door. Varini and Sturio rush in. Just after, Gloriana and Fortia give one loud Sbrick. In some Time, an headless Trunk is tossed from the Window upon the Stage. After that, Varini, Fortia, and Sturio come out of the House, cross the Stage, and Exeunt.

S C E N E II. continues, and dark.

Enter Mellinto, with a Servant carrying a Lanthorn.

Mell. Some think Physicians might as well discover
 The Disposition of their Patients Bodies,
 By oft repeated Dreams, as Pulse or Urine.
 Thus, pleasing Dreams, jocund and full of Hope,
 Of Odours, Banquets, Musick, indicate

A

A Constitution temperate and even.
 Sometimes we're heavy loaden, fain would run,
 Would speak, or call for Help; but neither Feet,
 Nor Tongue, will answer our Desires: This shews
 Repletion. But if wing'd we soar aloft,
 Th' Humour's thin, and moderate in Quantity.
 Cold, Snow, and Waters, Flegm: Fire, Choler proves,
 And Forms terrific, doleful Melancholy.
 This may in Part be true; but yet sometimes,
 Dreams seem to rise from a superior Cause:
 Thus *Pharaoh* dream'd, and *Joseph* thence foresaw,
 When at a seven year's Distance, meagre Famine.
 Nor can I think, so lively an Impression,
 As just was made on me, can rise from Fumes
 Of Indigestion, or last Evening's Talk.
 When I *Castruccio* left, you know him, *Pietro*,
 And home retir'd, and laid me down to rest,
 Sleep clos'd mine Eyes; but yet methought I saw,
 With utmost Clearness, my much honour'd Friend
Castruccio's Father, with uncommon Gravity,
 And deep Concern upon his Countenance,
 In Mourning cloath'd; all else as when alive.
Mellinto, said he, repeating it, *Mellinto*,
 You've well discharg'd the Duty of a Friend,
 A Friend sincere, disinterested, hearty,
 As well to me, as my unhappy Son.
 But Lust possess'd his Head; Lust fill'd his Heart:
 He therefore lies an headless, heartless Trunk,
 Expos'd in open Street, where last you left him.
 Oh take him thence and bury him! Farewel.
 He said. Then vanish'd into fleeting Air.
 So clear the Vision seem'd; the Tale so regular;
 In Part so suited to my Apprehensions;
 That I determin'd, without Loss of Time,
 To know the Truth. And this 'twas brought me hither,
 At this unseasonable Time o'Night.
 And hereabouts it was I parted with him,

F

But

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But what lies here ? Let's see, the Lanthorn bring
Stumbles upon the Body.

This Way. Alas ! here is indeed a Coarse
 Without a Head ; *Pietro*, turn it up,
 And let's behold the other Side. Oh Heavens !
 Upon its Breast a deep and deadly Gash,
 And not improbably without a Heart.
 The Ring he wore was of a Make peculiar,
 I know it. Search if now upon his Finger.

They search.
 The very Ring ! The headless, heartless Youth !
 Ah poor *Castrucchio* ! Not Thieves have us'd thee thus,
 But to hot Lust hast thou a Victim fallen.
 Where thou suspected'st not, perhaps, wast caught,
 And sufferest Vengeance in the publick Streets.
 I caution'd thee ; but, full of thine own Sense,
 Thou slighted'st me and my Advice. But Wisdom,
 By all her Children, will be ever justify'd,
 Will at long Run be found most excellent,
 And safe to all that follow her Directions.
 But let us bear away this gawdy Spectacle
 To the next publick House we open find,
 Where, free from farther Insult, let it lie,
 Whilst I make Search after the direful Cause,
 And bloody Instrument of such a Murder,
 And get things ready for his Funeral.

Exeunt, bearing the Corpse.

SCENE III.

An Apartment in Varini's House.

Enter Valeria and Fortia.

Val. Lord ! What a Night has this been ! *Fortia,*
 where,
 Where could you be convey'd, where hide yourself
 When so much wanted ? Whence this mighty Tumult ?
 Who's murder'd ! th' Occasion what ? That Spectacle
 So

So full of Horror in your Lady's Chamber.

How came it there ? Pray let me know the Truth.

Fort. In this Affair, dear Madam, I intreat you
To think me wholly blameless. Had my Lady
But listen'd to my Counsel.—But you know,
What Servants say is but of little Weight.—
And then we dare but hint, nor always that.
Obedience, not Debate's a Servant's Duty ;
I beg you therefore to believe me innocent.
But have you seen my Lady ? I pity her,
Poor Soul I pity her, tho' she's much too blame.
I doubt not but you've seen her. Pray how is she ?
'Twas great Distress indeed I left her in.

Var. Distress ! *Fortia* ; why, such a Scene of Woe
As I have seen, what Fancy can conceive,
Or Tongue express ?

Not long had gentle Slumber seal'd mine Eyes,
Before, methought, I heard the Shriek of Women
From *Gloriana's* Room ; the Voice seem'd her's,
And, *Fortia*, your's. I likewise heard a Bustle,
Saw Lights pass and repass, heard something heavy,
As from her Window fall into the Street.

Th' outward Door was open'd. Then, at once,
All things were quiet, as if nought had happen'd.
Surpriz'd I was, but could not guess the Meaning.
I apprehended Thieves were broken in,

And, every Moment, dreaded their Approach

At my Apartment. But when I perceiv'd
All Things remain'd in Peace and undisturb'd,

I ventur'd forth, to see how Matters stood

In *Gloriana's* Room : And there I saw.

Good God ! May mine Eyes never more behold

A Sight so full of Horror. On the Floor

Were, here and there, dispers'd great Lakes of Blood.

Near her Bedside was laid a human Head,

Its Face tow'rd's her, pale, and besmear'd with Blood,
With all the Gashlines of Death upon it.

Her Sheets appear'd as buck'd in Blood. Herself,

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As if in Cerecloaths wrapt of purple Gore.
 Bloody her Face, save little Streaks of White
 Her Tears had made, descending down her Cheeks.
 In this sad Plight I found her. I enquir'd
 The doleful Cause. She wrung her Hands and wept,
 Her Hands distilling Blood. Where's *Fortia*? said I.
 She wrung her Hands and wept, but no Reply.
 Besides all this, I saw her Pangs come on her:
 She fell in Travel, *Fortia*; was deliver'd
 Of a dead Child; a Boy, th' abortive Hopes
 Of the *Varini's*. And such the present Case
 Of my unhappy Neice, poor *Gloriana*!

Fort. Ah poor Unfortunate! The Throws of Child-
 birth!

Miscarriage added to that Load of Sorrows!
 A Load before too heavy to be borne
 By her soft, tender, unexperienc'd Shoulders.
 But Vengeance starts at the same Time with Vice,
 Its Gaol not quite so forward, but as it moves
 Incessantly its Steps. It seldom fails,
 Or first, or last, to overtake the Criminal.
 Her Course was short indeed, her Punishment
 Lagg'd not behind, but quickly overtook her.

Val. Criminal! and Vice! apply'd to *Gloriana*!
 Oh! my Suspicions, may you groundless prove.
 But tell me, *Fortia*, tell me what you know,
 Nor keep me longer in this sad Suspence.

Fort. You know *Castrucchio*, Madam. He who first
 Address'd the Countess. He who had her Heart,
 E'en when she to *Varini* gave her Hand.
 For near nine Months he now has been at *Venice*,
 In Count *Varini's* Absence was admitted,
 By Night, in his own Person; but by Day,
 In that of *Paul Raquinto's*, a good Frier,
 As if to give her ghostly Consolation.

Val. Admitted, *Fortia*! who admitted him?
 Could you be privy; could *Fortia* be an Agent
 In Practices like these? *Berinto* plac'd

Great

Great Confidence in *Fortia*, thought her virtuous,
Of solid Understanding, not unfit
To guide, by Counsel, his young Daughter's Steps.

Fort. To pass impartial Judgment, you should place
Yourself in *Fortia's* Circumstances. Pray
Consider, she appointed him to come
At such an Hour, and order'd me t'admit him.
Could I be certain Mischief would ensue?
Or if I knew so much, could I prevent it
Without most imm'nent Danger to myself?
He came, Reception found, and I had Reason
To think this Meeting ended not in Innocence.
A dangerous Secret this. On one Hand Profit;
If I would serve them in their base Intrigue:
On th' other;—You know dead People tell no Tales,
And truly, whether they suspected ought,
Or from what other Views I cannot tell;
But from some broken Hints I overheard,
I know it was resolv'd, as most expedient,
The Count should be disabled to do Hurt,
And gentle *Fortia* to discover Secrets.

Val. Well, *Fortia*, be as guiltless as you please,
Pray to the Point. You say, he was admitted.

Fort. He was so, Madam, whene'er the Count was
absent,

And I believe without the least Suspicion,
Till yesterday the Count a Letter found,
In her own Hand, directed to *Castrucchio*.
He tax'd me as an Agent, offer'd Money,
He threaten'd. Ah! what Fury in his Eyes!
And in his Words Severity and Rage!

The dire Expression, and the Tone of Voice,
Will surely in mine Ears for ever sound:

"If from another Hand I know thy Crime,
"No Devil can torment thee worse than I will."

When so much Truth was come to Light, I thought
'Twas best consult my own Security.

I therefore told him all, without Disguise.

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He more in Temper seem'd when he knew all,
 Than when I met him first. Bade me be gone,
 Charg'd me be silent as I valu'd Life.
 We parted. Afterwards, with smiling Face,
 He told the Countess he must go to *Briens*,
 Where Business would detain him three whole Days.
 He, as we thought, set out. *Castrucchio* came
 As usual, being acquainted with his Journey ;
 'Bout Midnight *Sturio* knock'd ; I ask'd his Business ;
 He said, the Countess must receive a Letter
 From Count *Varini*. I whisper'd in her Ear :
 She bade me fetch it. With that Intent the Door
 I open'd. When behold ! *Varini* arm'd
 With naked Sword, with Brace of Pistols *Sturio*,
 Rush'd boldly in, ran to my Lady's Bed,
 Where, at her Side, *Castrucchio* lay asleep,
 Into whose Breast *Varini* plung'd his Sword,
 And with repeated Stabs let out his Soul ;
 Then dragg'd him out of Bed. Then, *Sturio*, said he,
 Lop off his Head. He did so. His Breast himself
 Ripp'd up with trenchant Blade ; took out his Heart,
 Which leaping in his Hand, Madam, said he,
 Turning his Face tow'rds her, This is the Heart
 Of your lov'd Paramour. How sprightly 'tis !
 What ! Would you have him wholly to yourself ?
 How could s' unreasonable a Thought possess you ?
 Let this, said he, be my Share ; take you that,
 And tow'rds her kick'd the Head with Indignation :
 Mean while great was her Horror, great her Anguish,
 And earnestly she begg'd to be releas'd
 By speedy Execution. But he meant
 To do her no such Favour. But the Body
 He order'd *Sturio* in his Arms to take,
 And thro' the Window toss into the Street.
 Then straight commanded him, and me, to follow him.
 And thus we left her to her own Reflections,
 And went from thence directly to the Council ;
 Which happen'd then, upon some urgent Business,

Later

Later to sit than usual. To them *Varini*
 Declar'd the whole Affair, the Truth whereof
 Was witness'd to by *Sturio* and me ;
 The Issue was, *Varini* was acquitted.
 If you would know upon what Grounds the Council
 Gave such a Verdict, *Sturio* best can tell you.

Enter STURIO.

And here he very opportunely comes ;
 Mean time I'll see if I can serve the Countess.

[*Exit Fortia.*

Val. I've heard the Manner of this barb'rous Fact
 And sad Occasion of it. I've likewise heard
 That you have been before the Council, *Sturio* ;
 And that my Lord *Varini* is acquitted.
 But pray inform me, *Sturio*, on what Grounds
 The Council going could such a Verdict give.
 Was it not Murder, and is not Murder capital ?
 Is this to execute, or to dispense with Law ?

Stur. I cannot, Madam, all was said remember,
 But will the most material Things relate
 That I can call to Mind. My Master then
 Having declar'd the Truth entire, and *Fortia*
 And I attested it ; the Chief o' th' Council
 Gave his Opinion, in Words to this Effect :
 Matrimony's that from whence Society
 Receives its Basis—That whereby a Son,
 A Father, Brother, are distinctly known ;—
 And th' happy Source of all that Tenderness,
 That Care, that fond Regard, which usually
 Attends such Relatives.—To that are owing
 All useful Education.—All Improvements
 In Science.—And th' Imbellishments of Life.—
 That without Matrimony, still in Woods,
 The Savage fierce intractable had ran.
 Matrimony, continu'd he's the first,—
 The solemnest Engagement,—strictest Tye,—

Most

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Most holy Bond,—Mankind engages in.
 Such Combinations wrought thereby, such Union,
 That Man and Woman in a Manner cease
 To be distinct. And in each other's Person
 So perfect a Propriety obtain,
 And of a Sort so high, and so peculiar,
 That one may justly say, the Man that violates
 This sacred Bond, and foully does pollute
 His Neighbour's Wife, commits an heinous Crime
 Against her Husband's Body, Goods, and Fame.
 That such Abuse confounded household Peace,
 Occasion'd great Calamities to Men,
 And often brought Communities to Ruin.
 That since of Wedlock such the mighty Use,
 Such the Convenience, and its Violation
 Produc'd Effects of so malign a Nature;
 The Laws regarding it had ever been
 Enforc'd by Penalties severe and strong.
 When *Noah* left the Ark, Tradition says,
 One Precept given him was, *Adultery's Death*.
 To *Israel's* Sons the Law's express. *The Adulterer,*
And the Adulteress shall surely die.
 The *Church*, he said, relax'd this *Law divine*;
 Some think with carnal Views. And in Effect,
 It gave not only personal Security
 To Wiveless Vowers of strict Chastity,
 But yielded large Domains, and noble Edifices,
 T' atone, or to commute for, Evils done.
 But as their Canons are not here admitted,
 But when consistent with the Laws of *Venice*,
 And as the Civil Law has made it capital,
 The Fact being plainly prov'd against the Countess,
 My Judgment is, *Varini* be acquitted.

Enter

*Enter Varini and Mellinto together at the same Door,
as if in Conversation.*

Var. What in the Street you found concerns me
not;

Let Dogs devour it, or let it be cast
Into some Puddle, for Passengers to step on :
Or bury it, *Mellinto*, if you think
The Villain worthy of it. The Trunk is your's.
The Heart I have dispos'd of ; and the Head
Is my good Wife's peculiar Property.
Nor shall the Head and she for ever part.
I've left her that to solace herself with ;
That stands upon her Cabinet, *Mellinto*,
And there shall stand. 'Twill help her to recall
Past Pleasures.

And who can tell, but it may bring to Mind
Some useful Meditations upon Death ?
Its gasty Look, and Smell, may cool hot Lust,
May wean her, by Degrees, *Mellinto* ; may serve
To reconcile her to her Loss sustain'd.
There shall it stand *Mellinto*, I'm determin'd,
Till its strong Smell becomes insufferable :
Then shall its Brains be scoop'd ; its Flesh boil'd off ;
Its Skull a Cup be made ; the only Cup
She ever shall be suffer'd to drink out of.

Mell. When Fury's at the Height, my Lord, sound
Reason

It utterly discards, and carries Things
Too far, and does induce a Sort of Madness.

Var. And ah ! *Mellinto*, such Treatment have I met
with,
From that detested execrable Wretch,
As is enough to make one mad indeed.
You can't conceive, *Mellinto*, you can't conceive,
From what a Pinnacle of Joy he's thrown me,
And into what a Gulph of Woe I'm fallen.

G

And

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And as for her, the hapless *Gloriana*,
 I lov'd her !—Oh, inadequate's the Term !
 I more than lov'd, 'twas perfect Adoration ;
 Not Woman could I think her, but some Angel,
 Who leaving blissful Seats, had Woman's Form
 Assum'd, to make me happy.
 But, I alas ! instead of a Behaviour,
 Suiting with Notions so sublime and airy,
 Have met with Perfidy, Dissimulation,
 Low Cunning, Fraud, and vile Hypocrisy,
 Sly Craft, hot Lust, and base Ingratitude,
 An Angel's Form, with Devil's Disposition.
 A Shock so violent, a Blow so unexpected,
 And in the Place alone was without Armour,
 Has pierc'd my Heart, and render'd Life a Burden,
 Has pierc'd my Heart, *Mellinto* ! I feel it here,

Laying his Hand upon his Breast.

And know, I cannot long survive the Wound.
 I therefore am determin'd to retire,
 My Resolution's fix'd, irrevocable,
 Into a Convent : nor have farther Converse
 With this bad World. And there shall I find Leisure,
 To recollect the Errors of my Life ;
 And my Affections tow'rds those Regions raise,
 Where we shall be belov'd, e'en as we love.
 And possible it is I may recover,
 In Time, a Temper cool enough to weigh,
 In even Balance, that hated Villain's Fact
 And my Resentment, which raises no Remorse
 At present ; and, I believe, will ever seem
 To me, if any, but a venial Sin,
 The last I shall repent of, and the last
 That I shall ever pray to be forgiven. [Exit Varini.]

Mell. No farther Converse will *Varini* have
 With this bad World ? But does *Varini* think
 A Convent situated beyond the Bounds
 Of this bad World ! There Emulation reigns,
 Detraction, Pride, Ambition, and other Ills

Do

Do not its Walls conceal from vulgar Eyes.
 He knows not what it is to be a Slave
 To petulant Humours of meek-looking Monks,
 Invested with an absolute Authority.
 But restless is the human Mind, and flies
 Known Ills, to run to greater but untry'd.

From Hurry to retire, and gay Diversions;
 To call to mind Things done; to meditate
 On that sore Conflict we must all engage in,
 Each separately, without Support, or Aid,
 Or Comfort, if none does from Heaven descend,
 T'extend our Views beyond that dark damp Vault
 We're hast'ning to: Beyond those fleeting Moments,
 Few fleeting Moments that we've here to breath in;
 Proclaim the Man of Sense, and true Discernment:
 But to do this one needs not be immur'd;
 Nor leave that Wealth to be dispos'd by others,
 Which us, in Trust, kind Providence had given.

Enter FORTIA.

Fort. Ah! Madam, what you've seen, and what I've
 told you,
 One would have hop'd, to th' utmost Line of Horror
 Had brought us; and that all beyond was Peace:
 But be prepar'd, *Valeria*, arm your Breast,
 Or Shafts I bring will wound you to the Soul.

Val. There have indeed been Acts of Blood already,
 With Circumstances dreadful, savage, fierce:
 But *Gloriana* lives, and I'm afraid,
Varini's Rage will ne'er subside, while that
 Unhappy Cause of his Resentment lives.
 His Love was great, nor less his Sense of Honour:
 Nor more his Love, than her Contempt of him,
 Now fills his Breast with an indignant Fury.
 But, *Fortia*, I'm prepar'd, speak and spare not.

Fort. My Lady's Chamber scarcely had I enter'd,
 When in comes Count *Varini*, and address'd,

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In Words to this Effect, with sullen Smile,
Th' unhappy Countess: With much Concern, my Dear,
I see you pensive still, and melancholy.

Physicians I've advis'd with 'bout your Case,
Who this Electuary have prescrib'd,
Which you must take immediately; 'twill cheer
Your drooping Heart, and raise your sinking Spirits.

Val. Oh *Fortia*! That Electuary I dread.
And from *Varini*'s Hand!—But pray go on.

Fort. Into her Hand he put it, highly prais'd
The Composition, and its rich Ingredients;
She took, did eat with Chearfulness, and said,
Is it their Orders I must take the Whole
At once? That, Madam, said he, as you like it,
And as suits best your Pleasure.—'Tis the Heart
Of your belov'd *Castruccio*, by my Hands
Prepar'd, according to the Rules of Art.—
She ey'd him with a Look of Earnestness
And Indignation mix'd, then warmly said,
'T has all the Qualities of richest Balsam,
And highest Cordials; 'tis Pity the least Part
Of such a Composition should be lost.

She eat the Whole with Eagerness, then laid
Her Head upon the Pillow; and there Distress
Appear'd in its full Strength. Those lovely Eyes
Remain'd no longer lovely, but a fix'd Glare
Gave Horror e'en to *Gloriana*'s Face.

Excessive Grief each salutary Sluice
For Tears put down, obstructed every Passage,
And hinder'd Nature's Efforts for Relief.

Varini seem'd concern'd, and left the Room.

No Respite thence. Her Agony continu'd.
Swoln was her Bosom as if 'twould burst. And Oh!—
She cry'd, nor gave a second Groan; and then
The Tempest ceas'd, and all was hush as Midnight.

Val. Ah! my poor Dear, alas! And art thou gone!
Without Repentance gone! reeking with Lust,
And choak'd with Passion! or hadst thou the Heart,

Unmix'd

Unmix'd with deadly Drug, of thy *Castruccio*?
 Not bless'd by Holy Church, not bearing hence
 So much as th' *Odour* of sweet Sanctity!
 Nor E'en, nor Morn, will ever I forget thee;
 Nor Angels cease t' invoke, nor Saints departed,
 To move th' Almighty Lord in thy Behalf:
 Nor Dirges, Requiems, Obits shalt thou want,
 Nor Masses for thy Soul. Not e'en *Varini*
 Will spare his Purse to purchase Peace for thee.

Mell. Some think th' Almighty Lord will hear and
 help,

As *soon* as any Minister in Heaven.

Nor, Madam, is it any mean Authority
 That says, such as, at Death is our Condition,
 Such will it be, at the great Day of Doom.
 But as the *Church*, our venerable Mother,
 Bless'd with unerring Light in her Decisions,
 Has found out *Arts* to make a *bad* Man *good*
 In his expiring Moments, or when Dead.—
 Pleasing Contemplation!—How oft have I
 Admir'd, with Transport, infinite Indulgence,
 That thus would order, thus dispose of Things,
 As to give Satisfaction to all Parties!—
 Wealth to the Priest: To others endless Peace.

Fort. Things are indeed most happily dispos'd.
 For thus one may enjoy one's utmost Wish,
 Yet all be well at last, on Terms so easy,
 As only cutting off loveless Relations,
 And giving what one has no farther need of,
 To those will think of us with pious Ardour,
 In holiest Exercises, even at th' Altar.

Val. Oh *Gloriana*! foul was thy Transgression,
 Contriv'd, and carry'd on with wond'rous Baseness,
 Attended with much Fear, and anxious Dread,
 Its End most terrible, and big with Shame.
 'Tis much we've seen already, much we've heard;
Castruccio's mangled Body; thy dead Child;
 Thy piteous Aspect, sore Distress and Death.

But

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But oh thy Father! Can he hear this and live?
 Thou was *Berinto's* Joy. Thou wast his Glory;
 His Staff of Age; his Shelter in a Storm;
 His chief Support in every great Calamity.
 When Loss succeeded Loss he'd smiling say,
 My Wealth's diminish'd, but I have my Child:
Turks seize my Ships, but I have *Gloriana*.
 The Sight of thee would smooth his wrinkled Brow,
 Dispel each Cloud, and banish every Ill.
 Oh my dear Brother, this must wholly sink thee!
 Nor do I more expect to see thee living.

Mell. To bear Misfortunes single is not difficult,
 But to endure them to the End when great,
 When long continu'd, and when oft repeated;
 This, this, *Valeria*, is the Work of Patience.
 But *Berinto's* Temp'rance, and chearful Spirit,
 His even Mind, long-practis'd Resignation,
 And Will submissive to divine Appointments,
 Make me believe he'll weather out this Storm.
 'Tis true, this Blow falls where he's least provided,
 Will therefore deeply sink, and wound the more.
 But hardly does it merit the Name Patience,
 To bear the Loss of what we don't regard.
 'Tis what we're over-fond of, over-prize,
 That gives Distress its Force. And thus we see
 A generous Man, in equal Circumstances,
 Will at such Losses laugh, as break a Miser's Heart.
 Would we then be at ease, and Peace enjoy,
 We nothing should admire. Nor our Affections
 Permit to run on any Thing with Violence;
 Since Disappointment in the favourite Passion,
 Unhappy always proves, and often fatal.

Since therefore *Things* are not to be depended on,
Ourselves should be the Object of our Care,
 So far as not t'indulge *ourselves* in any Thing,
 May make us but to run the Risk of suffering
 A disproportion'd Pain, intense, more durable,
 Than all the Pleasure such Indulgence yields.

Now

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Now Vice in truth's the very Seed of Misery,
And does as naturally produce Unhappiness,
As Grain dispers'd in cultivated Soil,
In proper Seasons, does produce its like.
At first, like that, 'tis cover'd, seems as if
'Twould rot and die, and we should hear no more
on't:

But, by and by, it sprouts, looks green, and flourishes,
And brings at Harvest a too plenteous Crop.

How oft has e'en a momentary Crime
Injected such a Taint in human Bodies,
As to make wretched this whole Term of Being?

Can *Reason* prove it taints not thus the Soul,
And renders it incapable of Happiness,
Whilst its Existence lasts?—Malignant *Cain*

The pious inoffending *Abel* slew:

Is not malignant *Cain* a Murderer still?—

And must not still the Consciousness of Guilt,
Of Brother's Blood unjustly spilt, attend him?

Heaven *may* forgive, but *Cain must* be a Murderer.

And one would think that even Heaven itself

Could hardly make our Happiness compleat,

Unless 'twould grant Forgetfulness of Ill,

When it remits the Punishment: That *David*

In those bless'd Regions ne'er could meet *Uriah*

Without being Self-condemn'd, nor think of him

Without Remorse. Oh Conscience, how immense

Thine Empire! And what Reverence thy Due!

If then 'gainst Checks of Conscience, 'gainst Warning
given,

Man wilful and perverse will taint his Body,

Can he say Justice is not just, or Mercy

Without Compassion, that he's not made clean?

Or if the Soul be suffer'd to remain

In its contracted Filth, by Choice contracted,

Who can complain with Reason? Must Things be
made

To change their Natures, th' Obstinate to please?

But

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But why thus to *Valeria*? She confides in
 A *Guide* celestial, and laments past Errors,
 Has left them, and observes his great Behests
 Unvary'd: Hence Ablution, and Purity of Soul
 Recover'd, and well-grounded Expectations
 Of an immense, a never-failing Treasure,
 Most joyous in Pursuit, and which attain'd,
 Fills all the Soul, and all we wish exceeds.
 For 'tis Religion or true Virtue only,
 That yields a present, and an endless Peace.
 Religion or true Virtue no Estate
 Incumbers; weakens no one's Constitution,
 No Family disquiets; nor disturbs
 The Peace, th' internal Peace of any Kingdom.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

*Let the Audience be dismissed with the most grave and
 solemn Part of an Oratorio.*



F I N I S.

